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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a view of the acknowledged lack of geographic knowledge exhibited by U.S. students. This view is grounded in the definition of geography that is developed through five themes: location, place, relationship within places, movement, and regions. According to this view, only a very small, usually trivial, part of geography currently is taught in U.S. elementary schools. Often that part is submerged in the questionable integration of geography into the subject of social studies. Geography needs to be taught as a separate subject. The function and use of the field needs to be emphasized over the data and trivial information that for years has distorted the public image of geography. A 27-item bibliography is included. (DB)

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Elementary Subjects Center
Series No. 18

A VIEW ON GEOGRAPHY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Bruce Wm. Pigozzi

Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

Institute for Research on Teaching
College of Education
Michigan State University

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Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

The Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects was awarded to Michigan State University in 1987 after a nationwide competition. Funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, the Elementary Subjects Center is a major project housed in the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT). The program focuses on conceptual understanding, higher order thinking, and problem solving in elementary school teaching of mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts. Center researchers are identifying exemplary curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in the teaching of these school subjects; studying these practices to build new hypotheses about how the effectiveness of elementary schools can be improved; testing these hypotheses through school-based research; and making specific recommendations for the improvement of school policies, instructional materials, assessment procedures, and teaching practices. Research questions include, What content should be taught when teaching for conceptual understanding and higher level learning? How do teachers concentrate their teaching to use their limited resources best? and In what ways is good teaching subject matter-specific?

The work is designed to unfold in three phases, beginning with literature review and interview studies designed to elicit and synthesize the points of view of various stakeholders (representatives of the underlying academic disciplines, intellectual leaders and organizations concerned with curriculum and instruction in school subjects, classroom teachers, state- and district-level policymakers) concerning ideal curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in these five content areas at the elementary level. Phase II involves interview and observation methods designed to describe current practice, and in particular, best practice as observed in the classrooms of teachers believed to be outstanding. Phase II also involves analysis of curricula (both widely used curriculum series and distinctive curricula developed with special emphasis on conceptual understanding and higher order applications), as another approach to gathering information about current practices. In Phase III, test models of ideal practice will be developed based on what has been learned and synthesized from the first two phases.

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Abstract

This paper presents the author's personal view of the acknowledged lack of geographic knowledge exhibited by American students. This view is grounded in the author's definition of Geography which is developed through five central themes: *Location, Place, Relationship Within Places, Movement, and Regions*. The conclusions are relatively serious but simple. Only a very small, and usually trivial, part of Geography is currently taught in American elementary schools. And, most often, that part is submerged in the questionable integration of Geography into the subject of *social studies*. This paper calls for Geography to be taught as a separate subject and that the *function* and *use* of the field should be emphasized over the *data* and *trivial information* which for years has distorted the public image of Geography.

Preface

This is one of a series of eight reports being prepared for Study 2 of Phase I of the research agenda of the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects. Phase I calls for surveying and synthesizing the opinions of various categories of experts concerning the nature of elementary-level instruction in mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts, with particular attention to how teaching for understanding and problem solving should be handled within such instruction. Michigan State University faculty who have made important contributions to their disciplines were invited to become Board of Discipline members and to prepare papers describing historical developments and current thinking in their respective disciplines concerning what ought to be included in the elementary school curriculum. These papers include a sociohistorical analysis of how the discipline should be represented as an elementary school subject, what content should be taught, and the nature of the higher level thinking and problem solving outcomes that should be assessed. This paper focuses on the discipline of geography; the other seven papers focus on the disciplines of mathematics, science, political science, history, literature, music, and art.

A VIEW ON GEOGRAPHY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Bruce Wm. Pigozzi[1]

Concern about the lack of geographic knowledge exhibited by the average American student has been raised in professional journals and the popular press repeatedly over the last several decades. This concern is well founded. As a nation we suffer when our citizens remain ignorant of geography. However, the nature of that suffering and indeed the meaning of the ignorance varies with one's definition of "geography." Sadly, the usual indexes of the deficit are limited to the inability of students to locate correctly a list of countries, cities, or rivers, or, in reverse, to name the feature or region indicated on a map. To be sure, tests show that our students, and, when they submit to tests, our adults, are often ignorant of the location and names of our neighboring countries, states, and even counties. And, our knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the world more remote is often worse.

> Each of our last three Presidents has publicly stumbled over matters geographical in nature: Mr. Ford's televised assertion that Poland was not a Communist-bloc nation; Mr. Carter's culturally abrasive reference to having "Montezuma's Revenge," while a guest of the Mexican President; and Mr. Reagan's mistaking the Mediterranean for the Caribbean and Vietnam for Iran during his first news session. (Gritzner, 1981, p. 264)

However, we may pose the question whether this ignorance is the root problem or simply the result, a symptom, of some other, perhaps more complex, educational problem. To answer this question is to consider the fundamental nature and definition of geography.

I began teaching Geography (university level) in the late 1960s, a time when it was quite common to give "map quizzes." Vividly, I recall asking

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[1]Bruce Wm. Pigozzi, associate professor of geography and urban planning at Michigan State University, is a member of the Board of Disciplines of the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects.

freshman students to locate North and South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos on a map of the world showing only national and continental boundaries. I was shocked then to learn that the young, draft-age students were about as likely to place these countries in South America or Africa as in Southeast Asia. It is entirely too simplistic to suggest that these students were so ignorant because the "geography" in their elementary and secondary school curricula had failed to provide them with the place names they would need. In 1969, when an 18-year-old, subject to the military draft, could not locate Vietnam, the problem was more than place-name geography. One might argue that the teachers of Geography should have taught these students well enough that they would know the location of these countries. However, two corollary questions are important: How could other academic subject areas teach about the events of the time without the student learning the location of Vietnam? And, how could young people of those days AVOID learning where Vietnam was located?

Implicit in the concern for our societal failure at place-name geography is the position that knowledge of location is important. But, why is knowledge of location important? This is a very legitimate and frustrating question asked by many students, probably for generations. Too often the answer is a simple tautology: *"Because you need to know it!"*

Clearly, my students from the 1960s had not learned the importance of relative location; they had not learned enough of the events which were unfolding in Southeast Asia to even know where it was. These events were the very ones into which many of these students were drafted. Perhaps they just didn't care? I wondered how many waited until they were drafted before they considered the need great enough to consult an atlas. Equally obvious, the academic disciplines these students had been subjected to had failed to

generate sufficient interest in the events which might stimulate the students to learn the location of Vietnam.

I argue that the failure in our system is not the fact that students don't know where things are but that they don't learn, or are not taught, why location is important. A rudimentary definition of *Geography* is "the subject which explains why location is important."

Casual comparisons are made between Geography and History, Geography being concerned with information in space and History being concerned with information in time. While often a limited comparison, in this instance it is useful because it allows us to focus on the elementary school experience.

How do individuals learn about the importance of the underlying dimension of history, the importance of time? As children we learn how to measure it; we learn how it is regulated; we learn that it is used in making decisions; and we learn how procedures (temporally sequenced actions) result in products, presumably useful ones. History, by relating sequences of events, conditions, and attitudes attempts to explain the characteristics of periods of time. But would we look to the academic discipline of History to assure us that our children can tell time, make a schedule, or follow a procedure? (I am resisting the temptation to deviate into a discussion of Jean Piaget at this point. His notions of how children learn about space and time provide an interesting and provoking tangent.)

The disappointment geographers have with Geography is not that we have failed to teach place names, but that we have not conveyed to enough students and teachers the importance of location; we have not adequately communicated the definition, and therefore the power, of Geography. This deficiency is not newly observed. In 1984, to combat the problem, the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE)

produced an outline of Geography for elementary and secondary education entitled Guidelines for Geographic Education: Elementary and Secondary Schools. It identifies five central themes for "the content and process of geographic education": (1) Location, (2) Place, (3) Relationships Within Places, (4) Movement, and (5) Regions. I am in general support of these themes and their intent; however, it is my intention, following a discussion of these themes, to question and critique the context of their application.

Five Central Themes

Location

Location on the surface of the earth is the most elemental concept in Geography. Far too many people consider this the extent of the field; however, it IS important. When asked WHERE places are, individuals can respond with *absolute* or *relative location*. Absolute location is determined by using one of a set of objective, coordinate systems. As we live on a spheroid, measurement systems for the global and near-global scales necessarily utilize mathematical (trigonometric) concepts. The detail of these measures of location, *longitude* and *latitude*, are often difficult, no matter what the age or context. Coordinate locations even at the local scale can be difficult. Who hasn't looked up a street name on a map index only to find "e-7" and then not be able to find either the "e" or the "7"? Absolute locations rely on abstract referencing systems which are generally objective and unambiguous, but often difficult to utilize.

Relative location is a more common and more natural positioning technique. Essentially it differs from absolute location in that the measurement is made *relative* to something not as abstract as a coordinate system. This relativity assumes some other information, such as a system of streets or local topography. For example, if a driver stops to ask you

directions to a nearby store, you are unlikely to respond with a longitude and latitude, or even "e-7." You will respond with directions along a street system. If you live in some regions of the United States (like the midwest) you may give directions using compass bearings (north, south, east, or west): *"Go three blocks east and turn south, it will be the third building on the east side of the street."* In those parts of the country where streets don't go strictly east-west and north-south, instead they go up-and-down-hill, along-the-ridge, or along-the-valley, other directions will be used: *"Go down the hill to the light at the bottom, turn right, cross the bridge and go up the hill. It's the building just before the crest of the hill."* Reference to the compass bearings is more the result of the orientation of the roads than a superior geographic sense on the part of midwesterners.

The simplest base for relative location is where you are at the moment the question *where* is asked; however, the concept of relative location is not limited to the personal or individual scale. When describing the location of countries, we often rely upon their neighbors: *"Argentina is just to the east of Chile."* This is a type of *relative location*. *Adjacency* is an important referencing technique, but we can also utilize measures of *relative distance* to define location. This simply means that we measure distance from a location of concern to another location of concern, often along a route of importance by relative measures; for example, Distance for the "forty-niners" heading to California for the gold rush was measured along the known trails of the day from where they were to where they wanted to go in units of "days" not just miles. *Absolute distance* is often not so important as the *relative distance*. Even today our commuting to work *time* is often more important to us than our commuting *distance*.

Place

Place is the second Geographic theme. Each place has a unique location on the globe, but places are characterized by more aspects than their location. All places possess characteristics which make them *like* or *different* from other places. Usually geographers speak of *physical* and *human characteristics* of place. The fog of San Francisco, the hills of Cincinnati, the rivers of Pittsburgh, the Spanish moss of New Orleans, the rocky soil of New England, and the cloudless skies of Phoenix are all *physical characteristics* commonly associated with those *places*. The architecture of San Francisco, the chili of Cincinnati, the rusting steel mills of Pittsburgh, the accent of Boston and New England, and the jazz of New Orleans are all *human characteristics* associated with those *places*.

In many ways these aspects of *place* are what all human beings *experience* about location. We each experience place; our childhood development begins in a place, a home, a yard, a neighborhood, a community. Children see it rain; they see the grass grow; they walk up and down hills; they meet neighbors; and they learn language and custom. As such, this *place* theme of Geography may be the first and most amenable to the classroom. It is easy to see how assignments to describe neighborhood and home, complete with drawings and maps, might reinforce and focus upon the concepts of *place*.

The educational challenge in this *place* theme is twofold; first is to develop an appreciation of the existence of places other than the one(s) a child has experienced directly. The second challenge is to teach why and how such appreciation is useful; that is, the challenge is to teach and learn the place characteristics of other places, discovering importance in their similarities and differences. Thus, the comparative extension of one's own experiences of place is a fundamental early lesson in Geography. It is

important for children to be aware of their place in the world not just by its location or even its own place characteristics, but by the differences and similarities of that place with others, even those far away: *"What can we learn from the nature of other places which might help us at home?"*

Relationships Within Places

When students begins to develop a sense of place and its various characteristics they are also in a position to recognize the processes which occur within a place. The third basic theme in Geography is *relationships within places*. For example, one may see the cultural influence of the eastern European people in many western Pennsylvania towns and cities. We can see how these people have influenced the style of churches, the nature of restaurants and food, and the types of prevailing customs. In other words, the aspects of those places are greatly influenced by these people. But one cannot help ask why are these people there? Why are the Hungarians, Slovaks, Croatians, and Czechs in these towns? The answer, that they were attracted or brought by the industry of the region, necessarily concerns itself with what is going on (or what went on) within these communities. It is an example of the third theme, *relationships within places*.

The relationships examined are between humans and aspects of the human or physical landscapes, the active interface between the human and physical environments. We ask how human beings interact with the environment, how they are limited by, and alter, the physical environment. Traditional geographic lessons in this theme would include the ancient Egyptians and the flooding of the Nile, the deforestation of Great Britain during the early industrial revolution, and the colonial development of fall line cities of North

America.[2] Given a choice we might also use more current examples such as damage from and response to California earthquakes, smog in Los Angeles, or the condition and potential of agriculture in Haiti.

The relationships within a place may also be used to develop strictly physical themes, which are also recognized as the domain of the geographer. *"Why is there so much fog in San Francisco?"* is a question concerning a process and a place. The answer is not directly the result of any human activity but is drawn from weather, climate, and topography. By a slight change of venue and a few letters, *"Why is there so much smog in Los Angeles?"* we can combine human and physical environments. Essentially this theme, relationships within a place, concerns itself with answering the question of why are things like they are in a specific place.

It is important to recognize that this theme is crucial because it demonstrates that the geographic approach is useful in dealing with problems. The question, why are things like they are in a specific place, may be asked in regard to real world problems: *"Why are the poor located is this part of the city? Why did the crops fail in this region? Why do people in this coastal area get malaria?"* This approach can examine problems of the environment and/or human society. It can also be used to explain problems which have been solved already, and thus represent potentially transportable solutions: *"How is it that the people in a specific community are able to feed themselves? Can this strategy be used in another place where starvation is a current problem?"*

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[2] *Fall line cities* are those which developed on navigable rivers at the first rapids, or water falls, encountered by the shallow draught vessels of the Colonial period. Viewing a map of the eastern U.S. there is a *line* of these cities including Providence, Hartford, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Raleigh, Columbia, Macon, and Montgomery.

At this stage it is important to note that Geography is more than a location and more than a description; it is a perspective from which real-world problems may be assessed and solved. This application of Geography to solving human-environment problems is not only important because it can generate solutions, but because it can contribute to an understanding of Geography. The subject is not just a compendium of facts, not a list of places, not a description of places; it is a structured approach to understanding and solving problems in the world. This power of Geography is available to the grade-school student. For example, how difficult is it to see the relationship between housing value and flood plains, between noxious land use and lower income housing, or the use of park lands as a buffer zone between industrial and residential land uses?

Movement

Movement, or *spatial interaction*, is the fourth basic theme proposed by the AAG and NCGE for geographic education, and in many respects it is an extension of the themes of *place* and *relationships within places*. "In practical ways, geography helps to explain varied patterns in the movements of people, ideas, and materials." (AAG and NCGE, 1984, p. 7) It is this theme which I believe is the one with the greatest potential for solving real world problems.

Human activities, social, economic, and cultural, invariably involve some kind of movement. This movement is controlled by many factors but we can simplify this by noting that there are important factors associated with the origin, factors associated with the destination, and factors associated with overcoming the distance between the origin and the destination. We can extend an example from above. Why are people of eastern European background found in the towns of western Pennsylvania? Earlier I said they moved there because of

the needs of industry. What is the complete answer to the question? The fact that there were jobs available in Pittsburgh and surrounding towns is part of the picture, part of *PLACE*. Also, the conditions in the eastern European countries were such that individuals and families were encouraged (or forced) to leave their homelands. Thus, the PLACE conditions in eastern Europe are part of the answer. In addition, each of those immigrants had a story, still passed down in many families, of how grandfather and grandmother came to the United States. The route through war-torn Europe, across the Atlantic in steerage class, the trials at Ellis Island, and the train ride to Pittsburgh are all part of the route between Hungary or Czechoslovakia and Pittsburgh.

However, the movement theme in geography is more than a spatial view of history. Imagine the location of your supermarket and even the spatial arrangement of aisles, shelves, and products within your market. The store is located to maximize the number of customers coming to the store. The arrangement inside the store is designed to encourage you to spend as you move through the store. Thus, there is profit in understanding the movement of customers and potential customers through space. City planners need to understand the nature of commuter flows in order to coordinate various traffic control mechanisms. From which suppliers does a company purchase raw materials so as to minimize its costs of transportation? When planning for the evacuation of people from around a nuclear power plant, where do we send them? The number of geographic questions involving movement which are of practical interest and importance to all of us is endless. Children in grade school may begin by simply thinking about their route to school, the path to their grandparents' house, their newspaper route, or where they will ride when they get their new bicycle.

At the global scale, the interdependence of countries is seen in the movement of many goods, both raw materials and finished products. Building upon concepts developed at the local scale, many questions concerning war, development, starvation, or political issues can be clarified for students through an examination of world trade as a geographic problem of *spatial interaction*.

Regions

Regions is the last central theme for geographic education; but like *location*, *region* is a fundamental or primitive concept to all of Geography. Regions are the basic units of geographic investigation; they are areas which show unity on specific criteria. Geographers, like all people, use intuitive regions: home, our neighborhood, our town, our state, or even the "south" or the "corn belt." But geographers often group together smaller elements which have similar character and produce a larger region. The towns of western Pennsylvania, which have large eastern European populations, might serve as the elements of a larger region displaying eastern European ethnic influx in the industrial heartland of the country. However, we may construct more specialized regions, based on criteria developed for particular purposes, such as the area within a 10-mile radius of a nuclear power plant (called the Emergency Preparedness Zone or EPZ), the region served by a spatial distribution of brand-name gas stations, or the area from which the Little League baseball team players come.

Regions are often more than the result of an empirical taxonomy of space; they may have direct and important functions also. City boundaries and congressional districts are regions which affect and reflect public policies for all of us. Flood plains and groundwater fields are regions crucial in

evaluating environmental problems. The concept of *region* is appropriate at the experiential scale as well as at the near-continental scale.

Thus, *western Europe* or *north Africa* are also *regions*. Geographers use regions to build bigger regions. The characteristics of the array of countries in Europe allow us to discover a unity in cultures, economies, histories, societies and more which, in aggregate, defines *western Europe* as a region. Geographers will also partition large regions into logical and functional parts. This may involve something as simple as the division of Michigan into upper and lower peninsulas or as complex as dividing Detroit into neighborhoods. Hence, in many ways the creation of regions involves all four of the other central themes whether the regions are aggregations or partitions.

Discussion

This essay was introduced with a discussion of the failure of American students to know the location of important places. I am arguing that ignorance is a problem, but so is the reliance upon place names as the index. Our society maintains a view of Geography as the archetypical source of trivia. Board games and television game shows constantly reinforce this view of our discipline. Educators often give a nod to Geography because it is recognized, unclearly, as an "important" facet of an educated person. However, the justification does not go much further than the television stereotype, "*An educated person should know about the world.*" There is a small, but fervent, literature on how Geography can, and should, be taught (see bibliography). The list of themes discussed in this essay is the backbone of the suggested curricula. However, such strategies are useful only if the teachers understand sufficient Geography to implement and expand the ideas. While I support the themes generally, I would like to argue against

the continuing and pervasive bias in which too much attention is given to *information* and *data* and too little given to *process* and *function*.

I take issue with the five themes in only two ways: I would not include *location* as a central theme and I would stress that the remaining four are not in order of importance. I would exclude *location* NOT because it is unimportant but because it is so fundamental that a single discipline should not accept, or be offered, responsibility for it. *Location*, *absolute* or *relative*, is a *primitive* concept, one which needs to be developed before Geography is taught. The alphabet and spelling are *primitive* concepts which need to precede the subjects of Reading and Literature. Similarly, as suggested above, telling time, making schedules, and following procedural sequences are *primitive* concepts for History.

I might be somewhat at odds with some of my colleagues on this point because *location* is the theme through which *cartography*, the design and making of Geography's primary tool, maps, is often introduced. However, I would also argue that the map, particularly in its elemental form, is a *primitive* concept and as such precedes the learning of Geography.

The AAG and NCGE, by identifying *location* first, have reinforced the trivial, place-name stereotypes; they imply, I am sure without intent, that it is the most important theme. No one would suggest that the alphabet is the most important theme in English or that telling time is the most important theme in History. The concept, principles, and skills of measuring and communicating *location* are fundamental to an education; however, I believe it is misleading to present them as a fundamental theme of Geography.

I also believe the ordering of the other themes (*place*, *relationships within place*, *movement*, and *regions*) unintentionally reinforces the exotica, place-name stereotype of Geography. It is too easy to focus on exotic places.

Some of us are naturally attracted to unusual landscapes, customs, and people; we find them interesting. But, the focus on exotic, often beautiful and interesting places, as in the traditional National Geographic Magazine, has also continued the image of Geography as a collection of travelogue facts. (In recent years National Geographic Magazine has altered its editorial policy to include more systematic, issues-oriented articles.) Some students are fascinated by the exotic, some are not. Even those captured by interesting foreign places may never learn the useful role for Geography in their lives except as a source of fantasy vacations.

Conclusions

The most important reason for learning Geography is because it is *useful*. The notion of usefulness is most apparent in the themes of *movement* and *relationships within places*, so I give these themes priority. The AAG and NCGE have provided interesting and useful examples of "learning opportunities" in support of these themes (and all the others) from kindergarten through secondary school. (AAG and NCGE, 1984; Geography Education National Implementation Project, 1987). It is crucial that students learn why location is important; why and how the characteristics of place are useful.

Even in kindergarten, discussing and planning the location of a new bookcase or television in the classroom will reveal *why* some locations are better than others. Concepts of aggregate (social) spatial benefit can be generated at a very early age. In later years spatial strategies for locating fire stations or even nuclear waste disposal sites may use the same societal principles, at the larger city and regional scales. Students may consider the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid at the global scale with many of the same ideas and concerns. Similar scale-nested lessons can be developed to

explain business successes and failures, the spread of influenza or new fashions, and regionalism in politics, to suggest only a few.

The second reason for learning Geography is that it is *interesting*. It is important to excite students to the diversity of our community, country and world. But, to argue Geography as interesting without also stressing its usefulness is to render it trivial. If students see Geography as trivial they will not retain it, even if they learn a little of it in the beginning.

I question if teachers whose only exposure to Geography is a single course in World Regional Geography can adequately convey the usefulness of our discipline to elementary students. The World Regional Geography courses, by their very nature, must operate at the near-global scale. These global matters are important concerns, but often reinforce the exotic place tradition. And, while interesting, this material is hardly of immediate or direct use even to university students, let alone the elementary students they will teach. Preservice teachers are usually exposed to too little Geography and, most often, to material which only strengthens the place-name image of our discipline. Inservice teachers find few stimulae to add more Geography to their curriculum vitae.

Thus, our society's geographic deficit is inbred; a spiral downward. Farrell and Cirrincione (1989) recently published results of a survey revealing many of these problems:

> The questionnaire was sent to 1,138 social studies teachers whose names and addresses were obtained from a national stratified random sample of the NCSS [National Council for the Social Sciences] membership. The return rate was 52.1 percent. Twenty-six percent had no undergraduate courses in geography; 55 percent had one to three undergraduate courses. At the graduate level, 65 percent indicated no formal training in geography. A majority of the respondents classified themselves as history teachers, 10 percent as geography teachers, and 13 percent considered themselves primarily civics teachers. (p. 105)

Farrell and Cirrincione also support my contention that Geography is suffering from a bias in favor of *location*, *place-name*, *exotic place* information and a virtual absence of *use*-oriented studies:

> Teachers placed considerable emphasis on place location as a primary function of instruction in geography. Of particular concern, however, was the greater emphasis given to items dealing with description as opposed to items dealing with process. . . . This view has the potential to eliminate the dynamic aspects of the topic and relegate it to the mundane. (1989, p. 108)

In the United States introductory university Geography courses (those usually taken by preservice teachers) commonly present material which is taught early in secondary school (or even before) in Great Britain. Geography in the United States suffers from the supposed integration within "social studies." I believe the failure of my students to locate Vietnam in 1969 is a specific example of the failure of this integration. Perhaps the social studies integration approach had, or even has, some potential; however, it is not communicating the fundamental importance of Geography to our students. I believe we would do well to imitate the situation in Britain where Geography is taught as a separate discipline in primary and secondary school by teachers exposed to the discipline as majors in university programs. And, for many years to come we must also provide motivation and opportunity for inservice teachers to develop an accurate view and useful background in Geography. This will require a variety of innovative summer and special programs to reverse the downward spiral. As Ronald Abler (1987) of the National Science Foundation said in his presidential address to the Association of American Geographers;

> American geographers have built an impressive superstructure of university and postgraduate education from scarce materials. . . .

But we've built it without a foundation of equally high-quality elementary and secondary school teaching. We can do ourselves and the nation a great service by devoting some of our time and energy over the next decade to completing the structure. (p. 519)

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